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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR WILSON PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

1. (C) Ambassador presented his credentials to Turkish President Sezer on December 8. In a cordial, 20 minute private meeting following the ceremony, Sezer commented on the importance Turkey attaches to its close relationship with the US, which he described as a fundamental point of his country's foreign policy. Sezer highlighted:

-- Iraq and the importance Turkey attaches to it remaining a unified state, noting the assurances he received in a phone call from President Bush in 2003 that were reiterated several times by Ambassador Edelman;

-- the PKK terrorist threat and Turkey's need for on-going assistance to stop terrorists operating out of northern Iraq and into southeast Turkey;

-- Turkey's appreciation for US efforts to facilitate the beginning of negotiations on EU accession and continued U.S. involvement in promoting a solution on Cyprus;

-- the need to expand US-Turkish trade and investment and for USG action to remove quotas and other limits that curb Turkish exports to US markets; and

-- the government's appreciation of work to derail efforts by the Armenian diaspora to spoil US-Turkish relations (e.g., the Armenian genocide resolutions).

2. (C) Ambassador recounted Secretary Rice's comments at his swearing in on the strategic importance of US-Turkish relations. He noted his previous meetings with Sezer in Baku in connection with the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline and said the record of close US-Turkish collaboration reflected in BTC is the template from which we should work from now on issues of common interest. Ambassador lauded Turkey's contributions to a successful, democratic Iraq, including the meeting with Iraqi Sunnis that FM Gul and Ambassador Khalilzad participated in the previous weekend in Istanbul. He touched briefly on our interest in working with Turkey on Cyprus, where we share the goal of negotiating an overall settlement acceptable to both sides of the island. Ambassador said he hopes to re-energize US-Turkish dialogue on the Caucasus and Central Asia, noting that Turkey can play a useful role with all the countries in the region. There and elsewhere in the world, Turkey is an important inspiration, showing what free people living under democratic governance can accomplish. Regarding business issues, Ambassador said he would like to address obstacles American companies encounter in Turkey, as well as issues Turkish firms face in the US.

3. (C) The normally dour Sezer was unusually animated and friendly, presumably reflecting his and the government's interest in continuing the improvements in the tone of US-Turkish relations that has been evident in recent months.

WILSON